

BOOK REVIEWS

THORACIC SURGERY. By Richard H. Sweet, M.D., Associate Clinical Professor of Surgery, Harvard University Medical School. Illustrations by Jorge Rodriguez Arroyo, M.D., Assistant in Surgical Therapeutics, University of Mexico Medical School. W. B. Saunders Company, Philadelphia, 1950. \$10.00.

This is a difficult book for a reviewer to report upon. The title "Thoracic Surgery" is misleading; in fact, it should be more accurately entitled "Techniques of Thoracic Surgery as Practiced by Richard Sweet, M.D."

It starts out with the concept that any qualified surgeon may become proficient in thoracic surgery by mastering the techniques described by Dr. Sweet. It makes the thoracic surgeon purely a technician. Diagnosis, pathological findings and indications for operation are entirely ignored. With the above limitations in mind one can then proceed to evaluate the work as a whole and here one can find much of value. The operations described are those found useful by the author. Discussion of the anatomy of the thoracic cage and the illustrations presented are excellent. The Jackson-Huber nomenclature was adopted for the pulmonary segments, but here, as elsewhere in the book, no credit is given to the originator of the nomenclature. Preoperative medication, preparation and anesthesia problems are well discussed. The operation of thoracoplasty is well covered. Of interest is that in the treatment of the "stove-in" chest no mention is made of the value of a local anesthetic block. Of unique value and arrangement is the outline of procedure for pneumonectomy and lobectomy on the right and left sides with back references to anatomical illustrations. It is refreshing to see that Dr. Sweet debunks "vago-vagal" reflexes and attributes these phenomena to anoxia.

The problem of cardiac arrest and its prophylaxis is very well presented. The various operative procedures under "Mediastinum" and "Esophagus" are well discussed.

Of interest in discussing esophagoplasties is the fact that no mention is made of esophageal dilatation. The excellent operation known as the Heller procedure is only referred to and in this book Dr. Sweet advocates fixation of the stomach above the diaphragm following esophagoplasty.

Viewed critically, this volume is an excellent addition to a surgeon's library where there is need for a ready reference book giving good anatomical details and outlining a few proven procedures. However, it should not be considered as being a textbook of thoracic surgery.

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BRAIN METABOLISM AND CEREBRAL DISORDERS. By Harold E. Himwich, M.D., Chief, Clinical Research Branch, Medical Division, Army Chemical Center, Maryland. The Williams and Wilkins Company, Baltimore, 1951. 451 pages. \$6.00.

This is a truly monumental piece of work in which the author attempts to correlate what is known of metabolic processes in nervous tissue with normal and abnormal functioning of the human nervous system. Incomplete as this knowledge is at present, familiarity with it is of great value to every physician, and most particularly to the psychiatrist.

The various alternative metabolic pathways are considered in detail, and in a highly technical manner. However, such is the organization of the book that there is always a summary provided in relatively non-technical language for the reader not especially qualified in the particular field under discussion.

The author ventures rather beyond the borders of certain knowledge into the field of speculation, but there is nothing

dogmatic about his presentation of controversial subjects, and one is stimulated by his boldness. As well as being of interest to anyone with a curiosity in regard to what we know of how the nervous system functions, the book is of tremendous value to those engaged in research in this field, since it is well documented.

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CLINICAL LABORATORY METHODS—Fourth Edition. By W. E. Bray, B.A., M.D., Professor of Clinical Pathology, University of Virginia, Director of Clinical Laboratories, University of Virginia Hospital. 119 test illustrations, and 18 color plates, 614 pages. The C. V. Mosby Company, St. Louis, 1951. \$7.25.

In no textbook has the reviewer ever seen more concentrated, better organized material presented in 562 pages of text than in this particular fourth edition. Most of the worthwhile and important material has been carried over from previous editions but this edition has brought the book up to date so that most of the present accepted tests of recent origin are included. Improved techniques in other examinations are also included in this edition. The Rh problem has been brought up to date and considerable improvement has been made in the study of bone marrows, the anemias, the mycoses, and bacteriology, especially in reference to the antibiotics. The book includes an excellent table of known normal values expressed in both milligrams per cent and milliequivalents. Papanicolaou's method of staining is included in the text and many very recent modifications of older tests have also been included. This book is a "must" for all pathologists, clinical pathologists, and all physicians having any interest whatsoever in laboratory procedures. It is highly recommended. Its only fault is in its illustrations. It is hoped that in future editions the author will secure the services of a qualified medical illustrator, as many of the illustrations definitely detract from an otherwise excellent book.

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DIABETES INSIPIDUS. By Harry Blotner, M.D., Associate Visiting Physician, Beth Israel Hospital, Boston, Mass. Edited by Henry A. Christian, A.M., M.D., LL.D., Sc.D. (Hon.), M.A.C.P., Hon. F.R.C.P. (Can.), D.S.M. (A.M.A.). Oxford University Press, New York, 1951. 160 pages.

This monograph presents in ideal fashion for the doctor the subject of diabetes insipidus. The introductory historical section is of great interest. This is followed by the full discussion on the physiology of thirst and water metabolism and the pathological anatomy of patients with diabetes insipidus, a comprehensive clinical description, laboratory studies and treatment. The book is well illustrated with many charts and tablets, reproductions of x-rays, etc., and there is a bibliography of 470 titles. Certainly Dr. Blotner left no stone unturned in producing a comprehensive and up-to-date discussion of this interesting subject.

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DIABETES MELLITUS—Principles and Treatment. By Garfield G. Duncan, M.D., Clinical Professor of Medicine, Jefferson Medical College. Illustrated. W. B. Saunders Company, Philadelphia, 1951. 289 pages. \$5.75.

This is a monograph on diabetes. Although a number of other books have been written on the subject, this one deserves particular mention because it is written clearly and succinctly. The reviewer finds himself in general agreement with the author's ideas; even where he may not agree, he finds the ideas well presented.

The food exchanges system, recently adopted by the American Dietetic and American Diabetes Associations, is discussed at some length. Dr. Duncan has found it useful and recommends it in detail. Any physician or patient not acquainted with it may find certain difficulties in getting used to it. (The diabetic who has been taught that bread is a food to be used with caution will have to accustom himself to the thought of eating nine bread exchanges on a 1,700-calory diet.) In the text the number of calories in each of the food exchanges is sensibly rounded off to the nearest 5 or 0. This is not true of Table 15 on page 112, which summarizes the composition of food.

The author is to be commended for emphasizing the fact that foods which are best for other members of the family are best for diabetics too, and that there is rarely need for these patients to have special diabetic foods.

The book is endorsed as an excellent guide for the internist or general practitioner who treats diabetics, as well as for the medical student who is learning about this subject.

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ELECTROENCEPHALOGRAPHY IN CLINICAL PRACTICE. By Robert S. Schwab, M.D., Director of the Brain Wave Laboratory, Massachusetts General Hospital. Illustrated. W. B. Saunders Company, Philadelphia, 1951. 195 pages. \$6.50.

This book presents in very concise form what the practitioner should know about the procedure of electroencephalography. The usefulness of the procedure is conservatively evaluated, and if all physicians who request electroencephalograms on their patients were familiar with the material presented the lot of the electroencephalographer would be greatly alleviated. The various abnormalities and their significance are enumerated, without, however, the many illustrations to be found in the more ambitious atlases on the subject.

Although the author specifies that this is not to be considered a text on the subject, in the reviewer's opinion it can well serve as such. It is simply and clearly written, and presents both the theoretical and practical aspects. It can be highly recommended both to the physician who uses electroencephalography and to the electroencephalographer who is setting up a laboratory.

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YOUR SINUS TROUBLES AND TREATMENTS—An Authoritative Explanation for the Layman, with Recommendations for the Treatment of Your Sinus Conditions, Colds, Hay Fever and Other Allergies. By Friedrich S. Brodnitz, M.D. Abelard Press, 381 Fourth Avenue, New York, 1950. 243 pages. \$2.50.

The book presented as an authoritative explanation for the layman, is a volume of 243 pages of acceptable paper and satisfactory type. The introduction is interesting and sheds considerable light on the personality and mental attitude of the author. It contains a significant statement to the effect that he has a board with medical illustrations on the wall of the treatment room that has served him well in enlightening patients about the localization and the mechanics of their afflictions. The book was born of a desire to put daily piecemeal lectures into writing. The statement that "There is nothing worth knowing in science than cannot be explained in everyday language" is immediately followed by one to the effect that a certain number of medical terms proved unavoidable. This was made acceptable on the basis that the reader will find the origin and meaning of each unavoidable medical term explained the first time it is used. In general the author has followed this plan.

Any attempt to present for the layman a clear-cut, useful mental picture of the anatomy, physiology and function of

the normal nose and sinuses to say nothing of associated pathology, diagnosis and treatment of and for these structures in this allotted page space is doomed to failure. Add to these the subject of allergy and the use of antihistamine drugs and it becomes evident that the dilution factor of incorporated subjects precludes any opportunity for detailed discussion.

There is no question as to the author's knowledge of the subjects and material. In the few instances when he deviates from the role of speaking lay language as he thinks the layman would use it he is delightful. Most of the rest of the time one has the unpleasant feeling that one is being talked down to. This is truly unfortunate, in that the reviewer believes this is the last thing the author would wish to infer. There are evident attempts to retain the reader's attention by employing known literary artifices. Unfortunately, the subtlety of the artist was not employed to wholly disguise the attempts to regenerate interest. One cannot recommend this book to the general lay reader as the answer for his questions about sinus trouble and treatments.

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MEDICINE OF THE YEAR—1951. By John B. Youmans, M.D., Editor, Dean, School of Medicine, Vanderbilt University.

"Medicine of the Year" is presented with a view to providing current information useful to the doctor in the practice of medicine. The publication is generally good. It contains abstracts of the literature by specialists for the benefit of the general practitioner. The subject matter is rather highly selective, according to the viewpoints of the editors of the respective sections. Because of its limited size, this series is much less complete than such a comparable review as the Year Books of Medicine and Surgery. Each section of abstracts has its own summary, the reading of which will allow the physician to predict what he will find in the subject matter proper.

There are certain defects which should be pointed out. The abstracts too frequently give too much of the opinions of the authors or the editors, and not enough of the meat of the article summarized. There is a lack of balance in the amount of space allowed to the different sections and in the manner of presentation. For example, the section on internal medicine abstracts 81 articles in 18 pages and does it in a clear concise manner, although the reader often will have to look up the original article in order to make use of the information. On the other hand, the section on obstetrics and gynecology abstracts 70 articles in 50 pages and presents its subject matter in considerable detail.

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MANAGEMENT OF CELIAC DISEASE. By Sidney Valentine Haas, M.D., Professor of Pediatrics and Director of the Department, New York Polyclinic Medical School and Hospital; and Merrill Patterson Haas, M.D., J. B. Lippincott Company, Philadelphia, 1951. 188 pages. \$5.00.

This monograph embodies the results of an enormous personal experience and of a very comprehensive survey of the literature. The senior author, Dr. Sidney V. Haas of New York, professor of pediatrics at the New York Polyclinic Hospital, now in his 81st year, has been a life-long student of the disease and is particularly well known for having established the value of banana in its treatment. Probably no other living man has had so large a personal experience with celiac disease; he records 603 cases, of which 370 were treated long enough to permit conclusions.

There is an interesting and exhaustive historical review. Celiac disease was described and given its name by Aretaeus the Cappadocian who wrote in the first century of the Christian era; he also recommended treatment with the